Areas of Concern Valuation RFP May 9, 2018 Webinar

Response to Questions Document

1. **Can you discuss in more detail your thinking around "creating a more holistic decision-making process that includes the economic value of restoration will enhance OGL's ability to prioritize projects in a way that accounts for the social, economic, ecological, and cultural value of water"? On the one hand, we understand you want the tool to be user friendly, but on the other hand you use the term holistic in the above."**
This refers to section II of the RFP, "Background."

    The statement quoted above is intended to provide background and context about why the OGL wants this tool and how the tool will be used. The tool itself is not intended to be holistic in this way. The OGL already has some prioritization requirements in place, but the economic value of restoration has often been missing from those requirements. Creating a tool that allows the OGL to add that component into decision-making will create a more holistic process.

2. **Are you able to provide a specific breakdown of emphasis so far as evaluation points of various terms under evaluation criteria?**

    Criteria are not weighted.

3. **Availability of data**

    We will share as much data as we can, but there is no consistent monitoring data for many of these projects.

4. **Will you share a list of all GLRI projects underway and completed in Michigan AOCs, and what is the availability of databases to describe projects and activities? Are there relevant databases that you would like the grantee to use?**

    We will share all the data and information that we can with the grantee and will provide a list of projects to the grantee, once selected. We don't have a preference for databases—the applicant should utilize whatever is most effective for their particular project proposal, as long as they can make the case that it is the best choice.

5. **Can you discuss in more detail your evaluation steps/thoughts in terms of "matching funds are not required; however, they will be considered?**

We would like an explanation of any matching funds that the applicant provides but having matching funds won't privilege any applicant over any other applicant.

6. **Can you provide more detail on your evaluation of "extent to which the project leverages private and other resources?**

The same answer from question #5 applies to question #6.

7. **Can OGL provide the list of management actions prior to the submission of a proposal?**

The OGL cannot provide a comprehensive listing of management actions, but some common examples that would be pertinent to this RFP would be:

a)   Complete a specified habitat restoration project in location X.
b)   Implement a sediment remediation project in location Y.
c)   Remove a dam in location Z.

8. **Each of the GLRI projects have a set of value-add actions. Do you expect the modeling to focus on a set of projects or on a set of value-add actions?**

In order to fully answer this question, we would need "value-add actions to be defined". The OGL is looking for the effect on ecosystem services of a particular management action. An example might be a sediment remediation project.

9. **Can you elaborate on the granularity or specificity of the tool output that is desired?**

There are not specific requirements for the granularity or specificity and we don't have a particular outcome in mind. We understand that the granularity is going to diminish because of the broad applicability that we're looking for. The applicability is the criterion we're more concerned about. The OGL is looking for a probabilistic modeling of an action through the ecosystem, not necessarily a precise prediction down to a very small scale.

10. **To what extent will proposed management actions be targeted at removing BUIs?**

To a very great extent. That is a key outcome of the AOC program. However, part of the purpose of this project is to assess what impacts a management action might have in addition to contributing to BUI removal.

11. **In addition to any available databases, are there data available on the performance of any project that have been implemented that could be used for the calibration and/or validation of the ecosystem model? In other words, are there measures of project performance success or failures. If no databases are available, is the expectation that the selected firm will create a database as part of the deliverable?**

Some projects may have outcome/performance data. Others may not. If those data are useful for calibration, we will provide them. The OGL is not expecting the firm to create a database as part of the deliverable unless it's necessary for the tool to function.

12. **Is the tool output intended to be converted entirely to financial benefit or can financial and ecological benefits be reported separately?**

The intent of the project is to convert ecological benefits into financial terms but there still may be value in having a separate estimate of ecological benefit. However, note that part of the purpose of the project is to help the OGL compare disparate projects and typically the financial aspect is the equalizer that allows for comparison across projects.

13. **What is the scope of restoration activities that the OGL seeks to be included in the model? Is it limited to the AOC program, GLRI more broadly, or all environmental activities such as Farm Bill incentives?**

Currently, it is limited to the AOC program. However, we are interested in the possibility of trying to use the model beyond the AOC program, so the grantee should be thinking longer-term. However, at this time, specific data addressing non-AOC restoration work does not need to be included.

14. **Number of application location?**

This question cannot be answered without further clarification.

15. **Are there any ongoing similar efforts, such as the U of M with Mott funding that are relevant enough for us to know about? Are you able to comment at all?**

The OGL is aware of the Mott-funded project. It has a different scope than this project and should not affect work on this project.

16. **The RFP has a focus on quantifying the economic benefits of ecosystem services. Does the OGL have an interest in other economic benefits, such as increased property value, tourism, etc.?**

   Property value and tourism are somewhat outside the scope of the project.

17. **Should the project summary be included on the cover page or on a separate page? If on a separate page, should it include identifying information including project team and title? Do the cover letter and project summary count toward the ten-page limit?**

   The project summary may be included on the cover page or it may be on a separate page. The project summary does count toward the ten-page limit. The cover page is included in the ten-page count, but the cover letter is not. The project summary should include the name of the applicant organization and partners and a preliminary research and modeling plan. The title and names of project team members do not need to be included in the project summary.

18. **Do the references count toward the ten-page limit?**

   Yes, they do.

19. **In addition to financial benefits, is there also an interest in quantifying social benefits such as quality of life index?**

   We are interested but it's outside the scope of this particular funding request.

20. **What is the difference between the cover page and the cover letter?**

   See page 6 of the RFP. The six bullet points under Section I. Application Cover Page, provide the information that should be included on the cover page. The cover letter, also described on page 6 under the heading VI. Application Package, is a document on the applicant's letterhead that has been signed by an authorized representative of the applicant. The cover page is included in the ten-page limit. The cover letter is not included.

21. **Is there available GIS data?**

   Probably not to any great extent. Some specific projects may have collected data, but it would be limited at best.

22. **Are successful financial audits required for all parties to a proposal or just the prime contractor?**

As far as we know, only the prime contractor needs a financial audit.

23. **Is the bibliography included in the page limit?**

No bibliography is required, but if one is included, it will be included in the 10-page limit.

24. **Earlier you mentioned that for-profit companies can included as sub-contractors. Would OGL require those to be hired through a competitive bid process or not if included within the proposal?**

Any contractors either need to be hired through a competitive process, or they need to be hired through the contractual policy of the applicant.

25. **Are there maximums on overhead?**

See page 8 of the RFP, Section N. Detailed Project Budget. The grantee will either use their federally negotiated NICRA or, if they do not have a NICRA, they will use a 10% de minimis rate.

26. **Do you prefer to receive a single model, or would a small number of models be acceptable to address different geography or circumstances?**

There is no specific number of models that we're looking for. Subject to the other criteria, particularly the applicability requirement, this is left up to the applicant to determine as appropriate.

27. **Could you describe potential user of the model, i.e., how user-friendly does it need to be?**

It is anticipated that tool will be used by Office of the Great Lakes. If training is required to teach staff how to use it, that's acceptable. OGL staff may not have formal education in economics; however, if training is required to teach staff how to use it, that is acceptable. Staff do not all have extensive training with environmental modeling, although some are proficient with some platforms. The OGL is not looking for a tool that will require that OGL to hire economists in order use the tool. It is not expected that the tool would be used by the general public.

28. **Then you are not interested in a tool that shows social, ecological, economic, and cultural aspects of management action.**

That's outside the scope of project. The OGL is primarily looking for the economic benefits of projects, based on their ecological effects. The social and cultural effects are outside the scope of the project.

29. **If able to quantify, can human health metrics be included?**

This is up to the discretion of the applicant. If the applicant feels that it's a significant factor and that it can be reliably quantified, it can be included.

30. **Do you plan to have the total number of hours of bid as an evaluation criterion?**

All of the evaluation criteria are listed on page 6 of the RFP.

31. **Is there an advantage to a lower than $300,000 total cost under cost-effectiveness, or does it not matter?**

Cost-effectiveness is a criterion; however, if the proposed budget falls within the $300,000 limit, then the quality of the proposed approach is a more significant factor.

32. **What level of detail does OGL seek regarding phase II elements as part of the submission due May 29?**

The OGL acknowledges that a lot of the information that will result from Phase I is necessary to develop the scope of work for phase II. The general approach should be outlined, but the level of detail is up to the discretion of the applicant.

The Evaluating Great Lakes Restoration Impacts Request for Proposals referenced in the May 9 webinar is available at the following link: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/ogl/2018_Economics_Project_RFP_618342_7.docx

Information on the Michigan Areas of Concern (AOC) Program is available at: www.michigan.gov/aocprogram.

Access the webinar recording at https://youtu.be/F5taB6LMzug.

Contact Christina Pastoria with questions at pastoriac@michigan.gov.